

# Jo Bonner

## THE WASHINGTON CYBER REPORT

422 Cannon House Office Building ★ Washington, DC 20515 ★ (202) 225-4931 ★ February 2008

### ALABAMA GAINS APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE SEAT

Earlier this month, I was appointed to serve on the House Appropriations Committee to fill the vacancy created when former U.S. Rep. Roger Wicker (R-MS) was appointed to the Senate following the resignation of Senate Republican Whip Trent Lott (R-MS).

Naturally, I am extremely honored — and obviously deeply humbled — by the confidence the members of the Steering Committee demonstrated in me by appointing me to the Appropriations Committee.

I sought this seat on the Appropriations Committee because I believe the time for change and reform — especially of the appropriations process and the much scrutinized subject of earmarks — is now.

My first priority as a member of the committee will be to serve as a vigilant guardian of your tax dollars, helping to expose and eliminate wasteful or questionable spending whenever possible.

By entrusting me with this position, House Republicans have charged me with helping to reform the earmark process and restoring some fiscal credibility to Washington. I look forward to working with House leadership and the members of the Appropriations Committee to aggressively reform the earmark process as we now know it.

### MOBILE RANKED #1 IN THE NATION

Out of all the metropolitan areas in America, Mobile County will have the fastest growing economy over the next five years according to Moody's Economy.com.

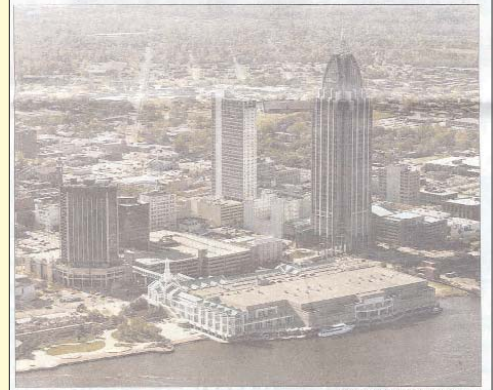
Crediting ThyssenKrupp's decision to build a \$3.7 billion steel plant here, Austal USA's continued growth, and the potential Northrop Grumman/EADS aircraft assembly plant in Mobile, Moody's projected Mobile to have the greatest change in "gross metropolitan product (GMP)," 34% between 2007 and 2012.

Over \$6 billion in industrial projects was announced for Alabama during 2007, a record-setting amount. Obviously, ThyssenKrupp was the largest announcement last year; however, a \$350 million Canadian rail car manufacturer and a host of auto suppliers tied to the new \$1 billion Kia plant just across the state line in Georgia, added to the record setting year.

This recognition can be added to an impressive list of accomplishments for the state of Alabama and its economy. The Alabama Development Office was selected as the winner of the Competitiveness Award by Site

### MOBILE NO. 1

County economy projected as nation's fastest-growing over the next five years



*The February 1, 2008, Press-Register front page.*

Selection magazine for two consecutive years. The magazine also ranked Alabama's 2007 business climate as Number 5 in the nation.

Alabama's economy — and indeed the economy of southwest Alabama — continues to do well. Our little corner of the world is one of the best places to live and work in the country, and more and more people are starting to learn why.



*Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to visit Superior Printing Company Inc. in Mobile. Mr. Donald Webb, president, gave me a tour as we discussed the many changes that have occurred in the printing industry over the years. Superior Printing, which has been in business in Mobile since 1974, is a commercial printer offering offset and letterpress printing.*

## New Travel Requirements Now in Effect

In an effort to strengthen border security, new travel requirements for United States citizens returning from any part of the Western Hemisphere are now in effect.

The new travel requirements have been implemented in two phases. The first, which went into effect last year, requires all U.S. citizens, including children, traveling by air between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda to present a valid passport or other valid travel document in order to return to the United States.

The second phase, which was implemented earlier this month, pertains to U.S. citizens returning via land or sea. Now ALL persons, including U.S. citizens, traveling between the U.S. and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda by land or sea (including ferries), are required to present a valid passport or other documents as determined by the Department of Homeland Security.

The Departments of Homeland Security and State recommend that U.S. citizens carry and present government-issued identification when traveling. Although it is not yet required that U.S. citizens present a passport, those arriving by land and sea must still establish, to the satisfaction of the inspecting officer, that they are U.S. citizens.

The passport requirement does NOT apply to U.S. citizens traveling to or returning directly from a U.S. territory. U.S. citizens returning directly from a U.S. territory are not considered to have left the United States.

Complete information on how to apply for a passport is

available at the Consular Affairs website, <http://travel.state.gov>.

Once you have applied for your passport, you can monitor the status of your passport application on the Department of State's website <http://travel.state.gov/passport>. Within one week of applying, you are able to track the progress of your application.

If it is within two weeks of your departure date, and the website does not indicate your passport is completed, you should call the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) toll-free at 877-487-2778 for assistance in arranging to have your passport ready in time for your trip.

Fortunately, the State Department reports that passport processing times are now back to their normal range of four to six weeks; however, as travelers begin planning summer vacation, there is usually a high demand for passports in the spring.

My office has been working diligently to help many of you who have applied for expedited passports, but it is important that you allow plenty of time, at least 10 to 12 weeks, in order to make the necessary arrangements so you won't have to delay that important business trip or well-deserved vacation.



*In January, I attended a ceremony announcing \$4.3 million in renovations at Bishop State Community College's Southwest campus. Over the next year, existing facilities for technical training as well as program initiatives to train workers for local economic development projects will be implemented. Pictured with me (l to r) are: Phoenix Team member Dr. James Cornell; Bishop State Community College Interim President Dr. Jim Lowe, Jr.; and Alabama Community College System Chancellor Bradley Byrne.*

## From the mailbox...

*Dear Representative Bonner,*

*I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your help in contacting the Department of Labor for me concerning my hearing aids. Not long after you contacted them, I received the hearing aids. I want you to know that until you took control of the situation, nothing had been done for almost two years.*

*I can hear so much better now. Thanks again.*

*Sincerely,  
A happy constituent  
Daphne, Alabama*

